

THE SINGLE-HEADED DRUM OF THE NASKOPIE (NAGNAGNOT).
INDIANS, UNGAVA DISTRICT, HUDSON BAY TERRITORY.

BY LUCIEN M. TURNER.

The drum used by the Naskopies differs from that of their neighbors and stock kindred, the East Main Indians, of the Fort George district.

The instrument employed by the Naskopies is a well-made, single-headed affair. The construction of each drum may differ in detail, but the general plan is preserved. The barrel is seldom more than four inches deep, covered by a reindeer skin. It is stretched over the barrel and held in position by a hoop one-fourth inch wide, and to this the membrane is stitched, so as to give uniform tension. This narrow hoop is placed upon the barrel edge, and a wider hoop, but slightly larger in diameter than the outer circumference of the barrel, is placed upon the narrow hoop inclosed by the edge of the membrane. Sufficient pressure is exerted to bring the membrane into proper tension, and then it is held in place by a system of thongs passing through holes pierced in the wide hoop and the lower edge of the barrel. The thongs pass diagonally through the pairs of holes, and by drawing on them the barrel and hoop may be approximated sufficiently to secure the desired tension of the membrane.

The outer side of the membrane (the side beaten upon) is crossed by a thong which passes through the barrel or quill end of four feathers of the wing of a Ptarmigan. A similar cord crosses the under side of the membrane, but at right angles to the one on the upper side, and it also contains four quills, pierced by the cord. The object of these cords, with their attachments, is to produce a reverberation of the sound.

The drum-stick used is a piece of antler fashioned so as to form a round but flat knob on a flattened strip or piece of the antler. A gun-cap box is often covered with a piece of deer-skin and fastened to a wooden handle, also covered with leather of the same kind, and used for a beating-stick. In the instances where such a box is used it frequently contains a few shot or fine gravels, which tend to create a rattling sound.

As the drum is never used outside of the tent, it is so prepared that it may be suspended. To effect this a double strand (two single strands) of sufficient length is affixed to any portion of the outside of the large hoop, and by means of the thongs the drum is suspended to the poles of the tent at a convenient height for the drummer. To the opposite side of the hoop is affixed a stout piece of buckskin, which is grasped in the left hand in order to steady the instrument.

The performer sits on the ground or on a skin with his legs projected. The left hand grasps the buckskin handle. A few drops of water are

sprinkled, by a dexterous flip of the fingers, on the head or membrane, in order to relax it, lest in its tense, dry condition it may burst under the severity of the blow.

The measure of the beat is two-fourths ($\frac{2}{4}$), or one two, one two, one two, the accent upon the latter.

The beating is always accompanied by words, either a monotonous chant of two syllables or else a disconnected recital of events; usually in relation to some particular occurrence, pertaining to the actions of man or beast.

The drum is used at all ceremonies, however insignificant may be the purpose for which it is beaten.

The conjurer employs it to succor the afflicted; to terrify the baneful spirits creating disquiet of mind; to regain the aid of rebellious spirits; to relieve the distress of want; to express his sorrow or joy. Scarcely a purpose, engendered for personal gratification, but it may be furthered by recourse to the drum.

When the hunters have been fortunate in the chase, good-will and plenty cheer the hearts of those people. The older men visit from tent to tent and recount the exploits of their younger days to the group of younger men who straggle in and become wrapt listeners to the recitals of the elders; good cheer is promoted by the drum enlivening the recitals interspersed with songs, and not until the gleam of the eastern dawn discloses the light of day do the listeners depart, one by one, to their places, while yet the drum beats long after slumber has fastened itself upon all but the narrator, who finds himself without an audience.